

**JOINT APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



# **Social Services Reform**

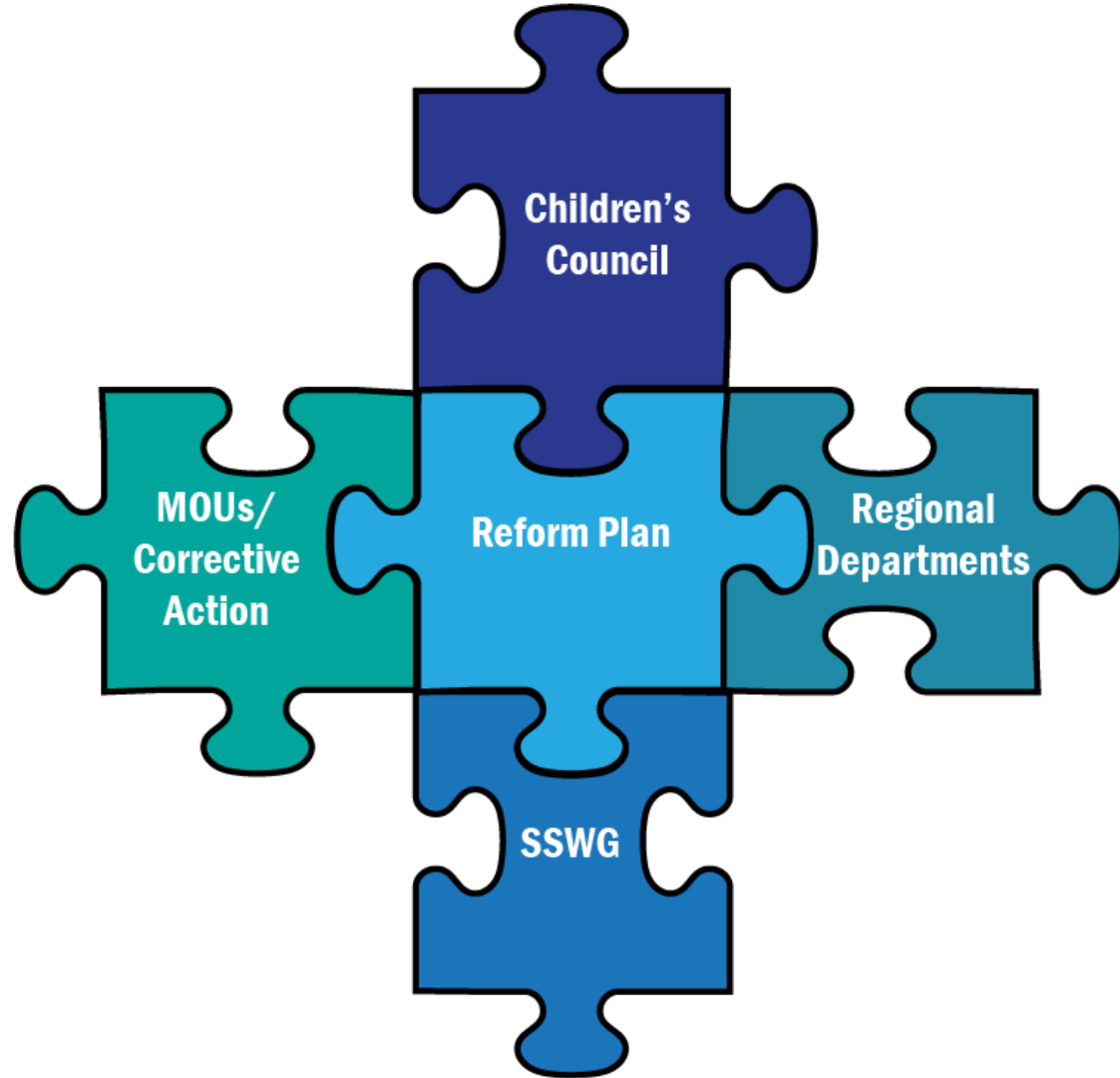
**Susan Perry-Manning**

**Department of Health and Human Services**

**March 20, 2019**

# **Key Components of Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act**

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# DHHS Report to Legislature

- **Family and Child Protection and Accountability Act requires DHHS to report to the Legislature to identify plans and provide preliminary recommendations to:**
  - **Provide a blueprint to shift from a centralized model of supervision to one that is regional and can provide closer support and monitoring to counties**
  - **Programs affected include child welfare, adult protective services and guardianship, public assistance, and child support enforcement**
  - **The report focuses on reorganization of staff and identification of resources needed to begin this transition**

# **Social Services System Reform – Legislative Report**

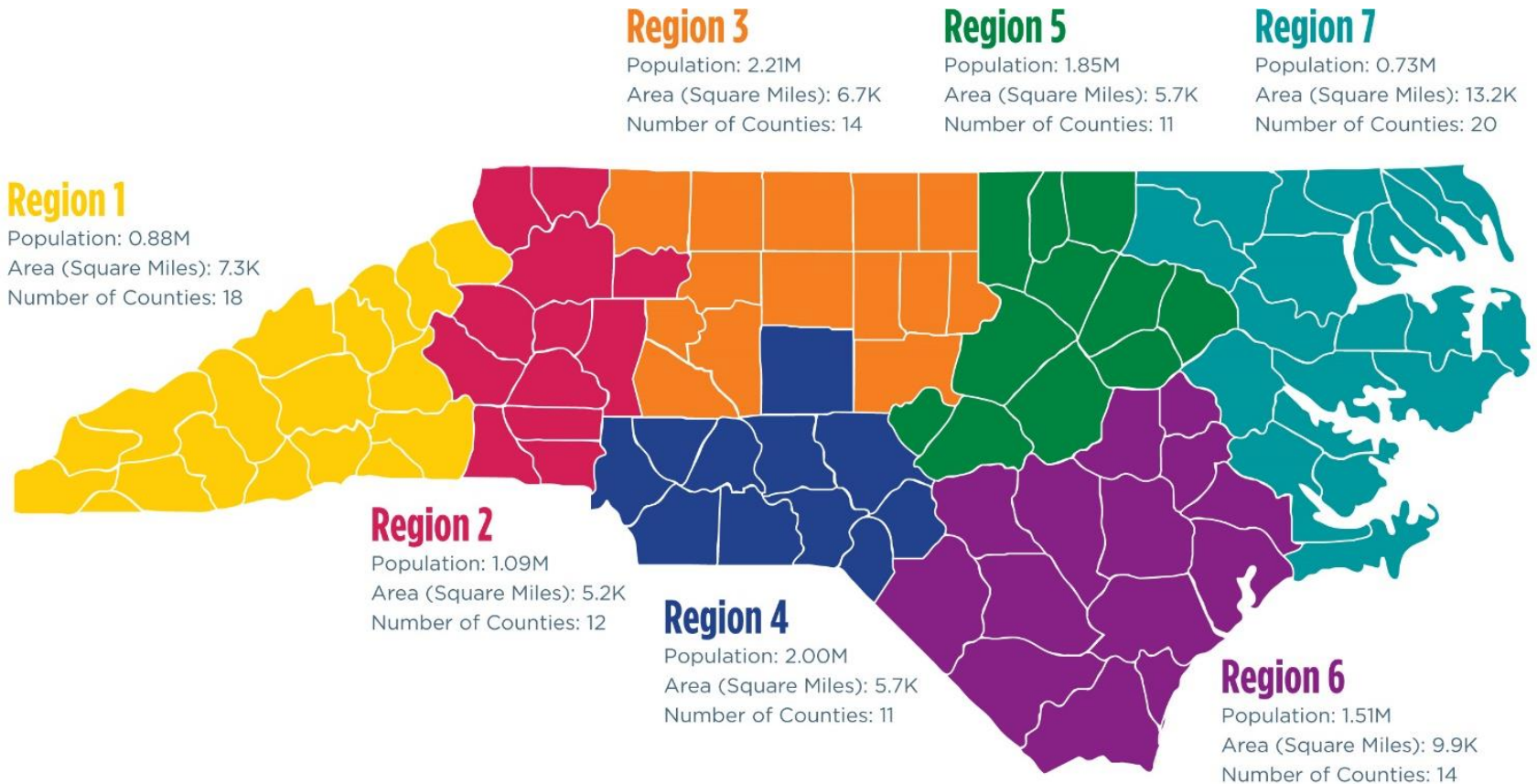
- **Recommendations submitted by the Social Services Working Group (SSWG) and Center for the Support of Families (CSF) significantly informed the recommendations presented in this report**
- **SSWG and CSF reports included significant stakeholder input**
- **Report organized into 4 sections with 14 recommendations**

# **Geographic Regions**

# **Recommendation #1**

- **DHHS concurs with the SSWG to establish 7 regions for regional supervision of county-administered child welfare and social services**
- **Counties within each region should be contiguous**
- **Recommend flexibility in legislation for establishing regions**

# \*Proposed Regional Map



\*Subject to change

# Staffing Needs

- In addition to the regional staffing needs, CSF identified resource deficiencies in central office support
- Extensive analysis into all current positions within the Division of Social Services was completed with the top priority of repurposing/redeploying existing personnel
- Findings:
  - 104 current positions can be redeployed for regional office and central office support
  - 43 new positions are needed



# **Proposed Regional Office Staffing Structure**

- **Regional Director and Administrative Assistant (2)**
- **Continuous Quality Improvement Staff**
  - Aging and Adult Services (3)
  - Child Support (1)
  - Child Welfare (3)
  - Economic Benefits (3)
- **Trainers**
  - Child Support (1)
  - Child Welfare (2)
- **Fiscal Support (2)**

**Total Regional Support Team - 17**

## **Recommendation #2**

- **Appropriate funding FY 2019-20 for 11 new staff to support child welfare and establish regions for supervision of Child Welfare beginning March 2020**

## **Recommendation #3**

- **Appropriate funding FY 2020-21 and 2021-22 to support 32 new staff to support all social services within regions to begin in 2022**

## **Recommendation #4**

- **DHHS to create 7 regions, phasing in by first establishing virtual regions and using existing community space by March 2020**
- **Appropriate physical offices and funds necessary to support full cost by March 2021**

# **Legislative Changes**

## **Recommendation #5**

- **Adopt child fatality review process recommendations made by the Child Fatality Task Force**

## **Recommendation #6**

- **Amend NC statutes to comply with federal requirement for fingerprint background check in addition to child abuse and sex offender registries for all employees of licensed child caring institutions**

## **Recommendation #7**

- **Modify legislative language to comply with the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA)**

## **Recommendation #8**

- **Modify language of NC Reach legislation to include youth who exit foster care to a permanent home through the Guardianship Assistance Program**

## **Recommendation #9**

- **Modify legislative language to include provision for training Social Services Boards no less than 2 times annually**

## **Recommendation #10**

- **Administrative Office of the Courts to conduct a feasibility and cost study of a proposed child support tribunal using a quasi-judicial procedure**

## **Recommendation #11**

- **Amend state law to provide a general framework for management of Conflict of Interest cases**

## **Recommendation #12**

- **DHHS to conduct a feasibility and cost study for transferring adult guardianship cases from the Department to counties**



# **Additional Key Enablers of Improved Social Services**

## **Recommendation #13**

- **DHHS to conduct a feasibility and cost study on establishing caseload range guidelines, pay scales, a funding equity formula and salary pool for county child welfare and social services staff**

## **Recommendation #14**

- **DHHS, in collaboration with key stakeholder groups, study and recommend a workforce development model for key positions in county DSS, regional offices and central offices**